

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

March 22nd 2013

Lessons prepared by Justine Light & Barbara Edmondson

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| Answer | Word | Definition |
|--------|-----------|---|
| 1. | rejecting | a) a series of actions |
| 2. | proposed | b) refusing to agree to |
| 3. | contract | c) not final or certain |
| 4. | tentative | d) a written agreement about employment |
| 5. | process | e) suggestion or opportunity |
| 6. | opposes | f) does not agree with or refuses to do something |
| 7. | offer | g) a possibility for a plan or agreement |

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Did the Calgary Board of Education agree with the new contract agreed to by the teachers' union and the Government of Alberta?
2. When did the teachers' union and the Government of Alberta come to an agreement on the teachers' contract?
3. What two reasons did the Calgary Board of Education give for rejecting the contract?
4. Which other board of education in Alberta has rejected the deal?
5. Does the Calgary Catholic School District support the new contract plan?

Discussion Question

Should teachers be allowed to go on strike to get a better contract? Would you like to be a teacher? Do you think it is a stressful job? What are some of the benefits of being a teacher?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| deficit (situation: to spend more than earn) | economic (production) | centrepiece (focus) |
| budget (spending plan) | con job (plan based on lies) | agency (organization) |
| campaign (plan to get voters) | interim (temporary) | steward (manager) |

1. The Canadian government has made an unbalanced _____ that has created a _____.
2. If the government hopes to reduce their debt, they need strong _____ growth.
3. Before every election each party has a _____ to increase their popularity.
4. The secretary at our office quit, so we have an _____ secretary until a new one is found.
5. I need to find a good financial _____ to help me invest my money.
6. The criminals had such a good _____ that no one knew they were being cheated.
7. I found an _____ that helps people write their resumes.
8. My mother always puts flowers in the middle of the table for a _____.

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. The new federal budget promises to _____ the deficit by 2015. | a) get rid of b) focus on |
| 2. The focus of Thursday's budget is _____. | a) a new plan for skills training. b) a need for strong economic growth. |
| 3. CIDA, a 45-year-old agency that _____, is closing. | a) helps Canadians in 30 international locations b) pays for projects in 30 different countries |
| 4. N-D-P leader Tom Mulcair says the budget is _____ that doesn't give real solutions. | a) a "con job" b) actually a lie |
| 5. Interim Liberal leader says the new budget is trying show Canadians _____. | a) the Tories are the best party for the country. b) the Tories are good economic stewards. |
| 6. There will likely be an _____ in the fall of 2015. | a) economic boost b) election campaign |

Discussion Question

How important is the federal budget to your life? Do you think this Conservative government is managing the economy well?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary - Read the definitions below, and then put the sentences in the correct order. *Answers are in the appendix.*

| Words and Definitions |
|--|
| bump – to knock someone – often from first place to second place |
| income – money earned by people |
| factors – issues, things, reasons for |
| energy sector – part of the economy that produces energy, power |
| boom – having great sales; quickly earning a lot of money |
| affordability – people are able to pay for something, like houses, groceries |

1. housing. We our and food need income for pay to
We need our income to
2. runner raced by bump to Canadian the first place. from The American
3. What a car? factors buying do before you about think
4. Alberta's gas. oil and sector energy relies on
5. money. the During oil boom lot a of Alberta made
6. When shopping affordability. for think a new about home we

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true** or **false**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. _____ Calgary has been chosen the best large city in North America to live in.
2. _____ Ottawa was first before, but now is in second place.
3. _____ Ottawa is not number one now because incomes there were not as high as in Calgary.
4. _____ More and more wealth is moving out of Edmonton and Calgary.
5. _____ Edmonton is now the third best large city.
6. _____ High incomes and low unemployment in Alberta are from the IT boom.
7. _____ Houses in Alberta are not affordable, according to MoneySense magazine.

Discussion Question

What factors affect your decision to move to a new city? Which city do you think is the best place to live in Canada?

Language Focus

Nouns

A noun is a part of speech that is person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns are usually the subjects or the objects in sentences.

There are many different types of nouns:

- **Proper nouns** – are the names of places, people, countries or organizations. These nouns always need a capital letter
- **Common nouns** – are objects or persons that are not specific. These nouns can be further divided into the following:
 - **Countable nouns** – are nouns that can be counted. To make the plural form we usually add s
 - **Uncountable nouns** – are nouns that cannot be counted, like substances, feelings and types of activity
 - **Collective nouns** – are nouns that represent a group of people or things (family, everybody, company)
 - **Compound nouns** – are nouns made up of two or more words (washing machine)
- **Gerunds** – are verbs ending in *-ing* that work as a noun in a sentence

Here is a list of nouns found in the second story. Can you identify which type of noun each one is? Also note if the noun is plural (more than one) or singular.

budget - _____

deficit - _____

growth - _____

centrepiece- _____

Tom Mulcair - _____

CIDA - _____

agency - _____

stewards - _____

campaign - _____

fall - _____

Canadians - _____

solutions - _____

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

| | MARCH 22 ND WEEKLY NEWS STORIES | TIME |
|--------------|--|------|
| Introduction | Hi, this is Carla Beynon. You're listening to Learning English with CBC for March 22 nd . | 0:00 |
| Story 1 | The Calgary Board of Education is rejecting a proposed contract for Alberta's teachers. The provincial government and teachers' union reached a tentative agreement last week. The Calgary Public School Board says it was completely left out of the contract process, and says the agreement is not a good deal for students because it gives teachers too much power. The Edmonton Public School board also opposes the agreement. Catholic school boards in both cities support it. Teachers still have to vote on the contract offer and it's unclear if the Calgary and Edmonton public boards' opposition will lead to any changes to the contract process. | 0:08 |
| Story 2 | The new federal budget promises to get rid of the deficit by 2015. But to make that happen, strong economic growth is needed. The centrepiece of Thursday's budget is a new plan for skills training. Also, CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, a 45-year-old agency that pays for projects in 30 different countries, is closing. It will become part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. N-D-P Leader Tom Mulcair says the budget is a "con job" that doesn't actually give any real solutions. Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae says the budget is trying to make Canadians believe that the Tories are good economic stewards, before the election campaign likely to be in the fall of 2015. | 0:55 |
| Story 3 | Calgary has been chosen as the best large city in Canada to live in by MoneySense magazine. Calgary bumped three-time winner Ottawa from the top spot to second place. MoneySense said Ottawa lost the number one position in part because incomes in Ottawa did not keep up with the growing wealth moving into Calgary and Edmonton. Edmonton was third in the best large city category. Other factors responsible for the success of Calgary and Edmonton are high incomes and low unemployment helped by the energy sector boom. MoneySense also made note of the affordability of owning a home in the two major Alberta cities. | 1:50 |

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

| Answer | Word | Definition |
|--------|--------------|---|
| b | 1. rejecting | a) a series of actions |
| g | 2. proposed | b) refusing to agree to |
| d | 3. contract | c) not final or certain |
| c | 4. tentative | d) a written agreement about employment |
| a | 5. process | e) suggestion or opportunity |
| f | 6. opposes | f) does not agree with or refuses to do something |
| e | 7. offer | g) a possibility for a plan or agreement |

Listening

1. Did the Calgary Board of Education agree with the new contract agreed to by the teachers' union and the Government of Alberta? No they voted against it.
2. When did the teachers' union and the Government of Alberta come to an agreement on the teachers' contract? Last week.
3. What two reasons did the Calgary Board of Education give for rejecting the contract? They were left out of the process. The agreement gives teachers too much power.
4. Which other board of education in Alberta has rejected the deal? Edmonton Public Board
5. Does the Calgary Catholic School District support the new contract plan? Yes

News story 2

1. The Canadian government has made an unbalanced budget that has created a deficit .
2. If the government hopes to reduce their debt, they need strong economic growth.
3. Before every election each party has a campaign to increase their popularity.
4. The secretary at our office quit, so we have an interim secretary until a new one is found.
5. I need to find a good financial steward to help me invest my money.
6. The criminals had such a good con job that no one knew they were being cheated.
7. I found an agency that helps people write their resumes.
8. My mother always puts flowers in the middle of the table for a centerpiece .

Listening

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. The new federal budget promises to _____ the deficit by 2015. | a) get rid of b) focus on |
| 2. The focus of Thursday's budget is _____. | a) a new plan for skills training. b) a need for strong economic growth. |
| 3. CIDA, a 45-year-old agency that _____, is closing. | a) helps Canadians in 30 international locations b) pays for projects in 30 different countries |
| 4. N-D-P leader Tom Mulcair says the budget is _____ that doesn't give real solutions. | a) a "con job" b) actually a lie |
| 5. Interim Liberal leader says the new budget is trying show Canadians _____. | a) the Tories are the best party for the country. b) the Tories are good economic stewards. |
| 6. There will likely be an _____ in the fall of 2015. | a) economic boost b) election campaign |

News story 3

Vocabulary

1. We need our income to pay for food and housing.
2. The American runner raced by to bump the Canadian from first place.
3. What factors do you think about before buying a car?
4. Alberta's energy sector relies on oil and gas.
5. During the oil boom Alberta made a lot of money.
6. When shopping for a new home we think about affordability.

Listening

1. F Calgary has been chosen the best large city in North America to live in.
2. T Ottawa was first before, but now is in second place.
3. T Ottawa is not number one now because incomes were not as high as Calgary.
4. F More and more wealth is moving out of Edmonton and Calgary.
5. T Edmonton is now the third best large city.
6. F High incomes and low unemployment in Alberta are from the IT boom.
7. F Houses in Alberta are not affordable, according to MoneySense magazine.

Language focus

budget - common noun, countable, singular

growth – common noun, uncountable, singular

Tom Mulcair – Proper noun

agency – common noun, collective noun, singular

campaign - common noun, countable, singular

Canadians – Proper noun, plural

deficit - common noun, countable, singular

centrepiece- common noun, countable, singular

CIDA – Proper noun

stewards - common noun, countable, plural

fall - common noun, countable, singular

solutions - common noun, countable, plural